

Appl. No. 10/028,125
Amendment and/or Response
Reply to Office action of 19 December 2003

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REMARKS / DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

Claims 1-21 are pending in the application.

The applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging the claim for priority and receipt of certified copies of all the priority documents.

The Applicants respectfully decline to add section headings, as they are not required in accordance with MPEP 608.01(a).

The claims are amended for non-statutory reasons: to correct one or more informalities, remove figure label numbers, and/or to replace European-style claim phraseology with American-style claim language. Claims 20 and 21 are rewritten in independent form, to conform to U.S. patent practice. The claims are not narrowed in scope and no new matter is added.

The Office action rejects claims 1-21 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. The preamble of Claim 1 is amended accordingly. Claim 1 is not narrowed in scope and no new matter is added.

The Office action rejects claims 1-2 and 19-21 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over Johansson et al. (USP 4,355,440, hereinafter Johansson). The applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Independent claims 1, 20, and 21 specifically recite a restrictor that is controllable to apply a restricting action to a pocket upon the occurrence of an enabling signal.

Johansson teaches a mechanical device that attaches to a wallet to prevent the wallet from being removed from a person's pocket. Johansson's device is a tension device that includes locking means 75 that are released when a user manually twists the fingers 70 of the lock 25 apart. When the lock 75 is disengaged, the Johansson's tension device expands to create a friction grip within the pocket.

The applicants respectfully maintain that a mechanical lock that is released manually cannot be said to correspond to a restrictor that is controllable by an enabling signal, in the


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context of the applicants' specification. However, in the interest of advancing prosecution in this case, claims 1, 20, and 21 are amended to recite that the enabling signal is an electrical enabling signal. The applicants respectfully maintain that, because the interpretation of the term "signal" in the context of the applicants' specification is an electrical signal, the scope of claim 1 is not changed by this amendment, and no new matter is added.

In view of the foregoing, the applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections of record, allow all the pending claims, and find the application to be in condition for allowance. If any points remain in issue that may best be resolved through a personal or telephonic interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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